

Alamosaurus

Alamosaurus
(AL-uh-mo-SAWR-us)
sauropod

The name alamosaurus means "Alamo Lizard." Though it sounds like a place in Texas, it's actually named after the Ojo Alamo trading post in New Mexico, where the first alamosaurus fossils were found.

Alamosaurus was a giant. It had a very long neck and enormous tail. It belonged to a group of dinosaurs called sauropods, the largest animals ever to walk the earth.

Alamosaurus is found in New Mexico, Texas and Utah. It is North America's only titanosaurid and one of the last sauropods living at the end of The Age of Dinosaurs.

All sauropods in North America died out about 105 million years ago. Then, after about 35 million years, alamosaurus showed up again, in the same place.

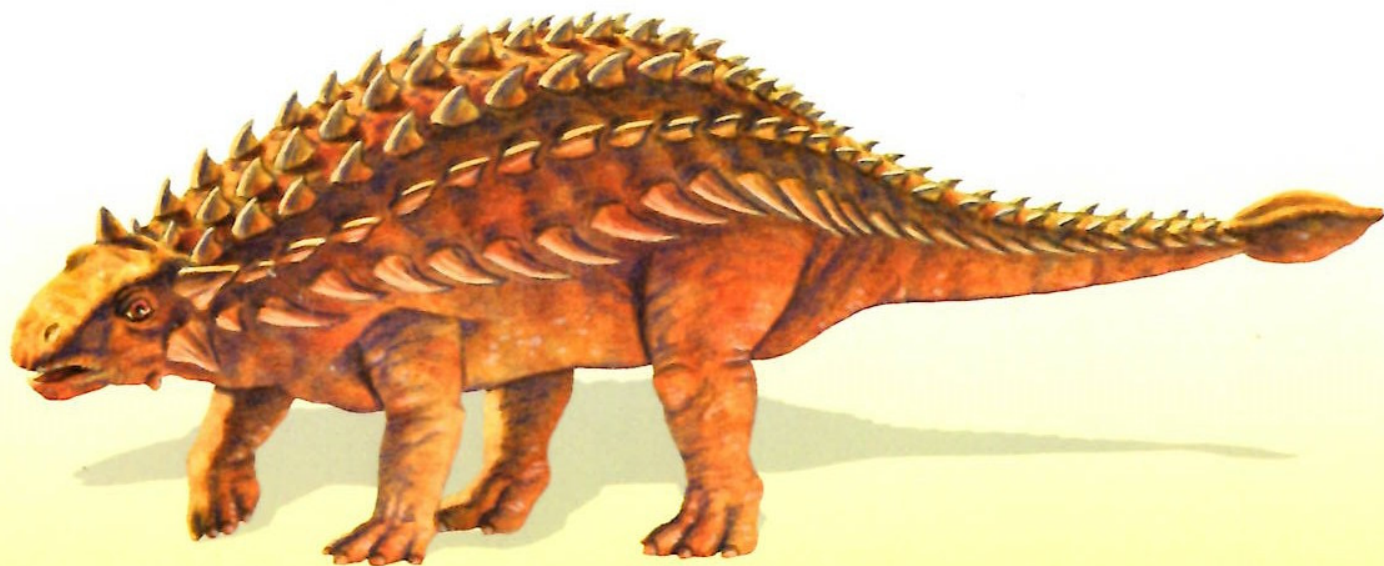
Tens of millions of years ago, North and South America were not connected by Panama, as they are today. They were two separate continents, floating like islands. Once they were joined together, scientists believe alamosaurs crossed over.

Alamosaurus was an herbivore, which means it only ate plants. It must have eaten quite a bit, because it weighed 60,000 pounds (27,216 kilograms). That's 30 tons!

Alamosaurus was usually 8.5 meters (28 feet) tall. That's almost as tall as a three-story building. It was more than twice as long: 21 meters (69 feet).

Alamosaurus lived about 65 to 70 million years ago, during the late Cretaceous Period.

All dinosaurs, including alamosaurus, became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous Period, about 65 million years ago.



Ankylosaurus

Ankylosaurus
(an-KILE-oh-SAW-rus)
ornithopod

Ankylosaurus had plates of heavy armor on its back that protected it from meat-eating (carnivorous) dinosaurs. It also had two rows of spikes along its body, large horns on the back of its head, and a heavy tail it could swing like a club.

Ankylosaurus had no armor on its belly, so if you wanted to wound one, you'd have to flip it over. That would be pretty hard to do, considering it weighed about 5 tons.

Ankylosaurus was the biggest armored dinosaur ever. It was only about 1.2 meters (4 feet) tall, but it was 1.8 meters (6 feet) wide and 10 meters (30 feet) long.

Ankylosaurus was an herbivore, which means it only ate plants. It could not reach very high, so it ate plants that grew close to the ground.

Ankylosaurus had to eat a huge amount of plants to stay alive. And since it probably had a fermentation compartment in its big belly to help digest the green stuff, it surely made a lot of gas!

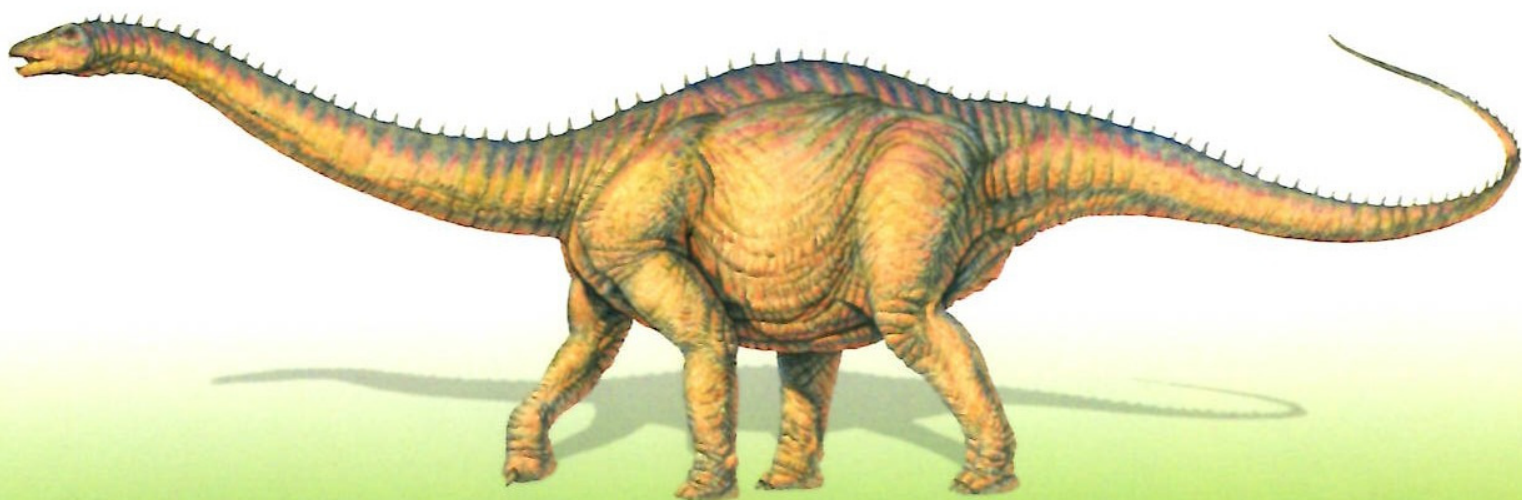
Ankylosaurus lived about 65 to 70 million years ago, in a time scientists call the Cretaceous Period.

If you pitted a T. rex against an ankylosaurus, probably the ankylosaurus would win because of its tough armor and dangerous club-tail.

Ankylosaurus could run at a pretty decent jog.

Ankylosaurus had a very thick skull that didn't have much room in it for a brain, so they were probably not very intelligent. Do any of your friends have a thick skull?

Ankylosaurus means "crooked lizard."



Apatosaurus

Apatosaurus

(ah-PAT-oh-SAWR-us)

sauropod

Apatosaurus was a gigantic plant-eater (herbivore) who trotted along the riverbanks with its friends and ate the tops off of trees.

Apatosaurus used to be called brontosaurus. That's because scientists thought the two were separate dinosaurs. It turns out they were different fossils of the same species.

Since the fossils named apatosaurus were found before the fossils named brontosaurus, and since scientists figured out it was the same kind of dinosaur, they decided to use the first name for both.

The apatosaurus (formerly brontosaurus) is one of the most famous and most popular dinosaurs ever.

Apatosaurus weighed up to 30 tons (60,000 pounds!) and grew as long as 21 to 27 meters (70 to 90 feet). That's like two school buses put together, end to end.

Apatosaurus had to eat so much plant food to feed itself it couldn't possibly chew it all. So it probably did what a lot of birds do today: swallow gizzard stones called gastroliths that would sit in its gullet and help grind up the food.

Apatosaurus was so big, it had to keep eating almost constantly to satisfy itself. Do you have any cousins who are like that?

Apatosaurus probably ate all day, stopping only every once in awhile to cool off, drink water, or scratch itself.

If a meat-eating dinosaur attacked Apatosaurus, it would swing its gigantic tail to knock them away, or stomp on them with its huge feet.

Apatosaurus lived between 145 and 155 million years ago during a time scientists call the late Jurassic Period.



Archaeopteryx

Archaeopteryx
(ARK-ee-OP-ter-ix)
theropod

The name archaeopteryx means "ancient wing."

Archaeopteryx is a very early prehistoric bird, one of the oldest birds known.

Archaeopteryx dates from about 150 million years ago, during a time scientists call the Jurassic Period.

Archaeopteryx was actually part bird, part dinosaur. Unlike modern-day birds, it had teeth, three claws on each wing, a flat breastbone, ribs in its belly and a long, bony tail.

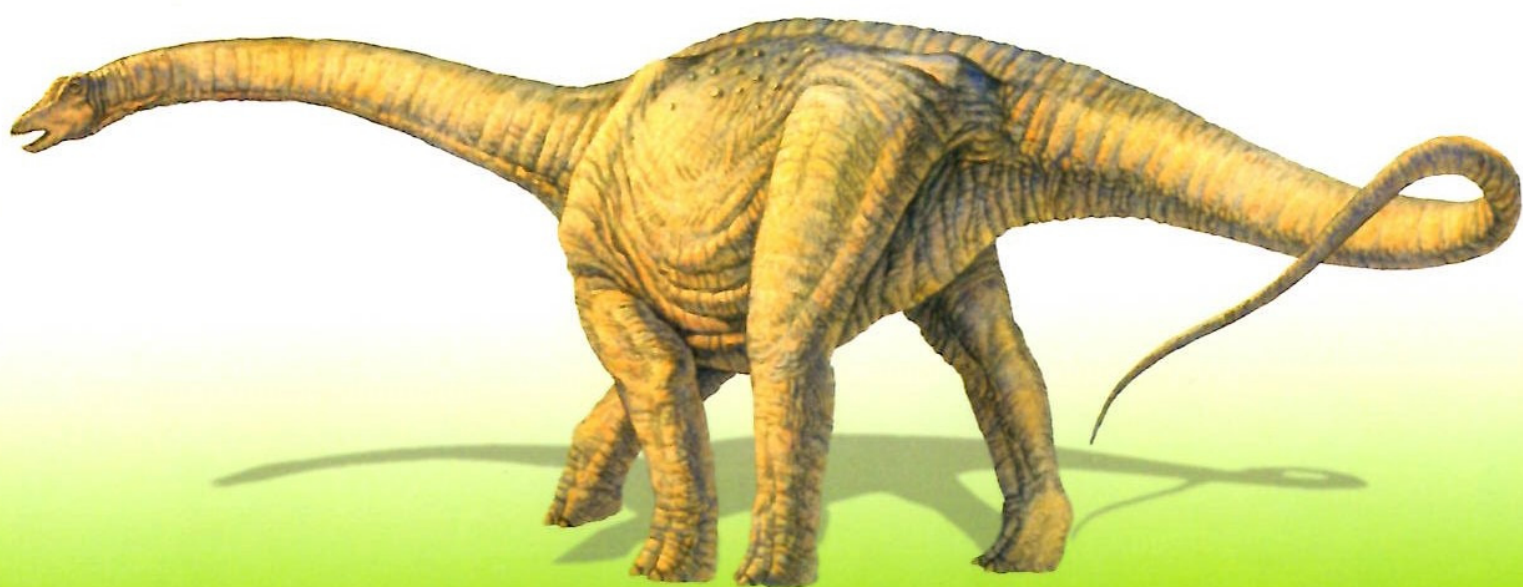
Archaeopteryx was about the size of a crow, maybe one foot long from beak to tail. It had feathers, but it probably couldn't fly very far or very well.

The first archaeopteryx fossil found was actually one of its feathers. To date, a total of eight full fossil specimens have been found, plus that feather.

Bird fossils are rare because bird bones are hollow and fragile, so most of the time, they just turn into dust. But every once in awhile they are preserved in the ground as fossils.

Some scientists think that archaeopteryx is a link in the evolution between dinosaurs and birds.

Because it is so well preserved with so much detail, scientists agree that one archaeopteryx fossil that was found near Berlin, Germany, was one of the most important fossils ever discovered.



Argentinosaurus

Argentinosaurus
(ar-gin-TEEN-oh-SAWR-us)
sauropod

Argentinosaurus was probably the biggest animal that ever walked the Earth.

Do you know that one argentinosaurs was as tall as a six-story building and weighed over 100 tons?
That's over 200,000 pounds!

When a young argentinosaurs was growing up, it could probably gain up to 100 pounds a day.

Argentinosaurus was an herbivore. It got so big and strong because it ate its vegetables.

Argentinosaurus was part of a family of dinosaurs called titanosaurs. "Titan" means enormous strength, size and power.

Argentinosaurus was about 120 feet long, from the top of its head to the tip of its tail.

Argentinosaurus lived about 90 million years ago during the middle Cretaceous Period.

Argentinosaurus ate pine trees, mostly. So its extra-long neck came in real handy.

Just one piece of argentinosaur backbone (called a vertebrae) is over five feet wide. That's a lot wider than you!

The name argentinosaurs means "Argentina Lizard." Can you guess what country its fossils have been found in?

We haven't found very many argentinosaurs bones, so we don't have a complete skeleton. But scientists can figure out what it looked like and how big it was because they know a lot about its relatives.



Caudipteryx zoui

Caudipteryx Zoui (cow-DIP-tuh-riks Zow-ee) *theropod*

Caudipteryx zoui lived in China about 120 million years ago, during a time scientists call the Cretaceous Period.

The fossil of this small dinosaur has made history as one of the most important finds of the 20th Century. It may prove that one group of dinosaurs survived the extinction at the end of the Cretaceous Period and lives today as birds.

Caudipteryx zoui was no larger than a peacock and it ran very quickly on its two legs.

Caudipteryx zoui was an unusual kind of dinosaur because it had feathers covering its body.

The name caudipteryx means "tail feathers."

The tail feathers of caudipteryx zoui were the most unusual things about it. They were about 6 inches long and probably very colorful.

Caudipteryx zoui was not able to fly. It had short forelimbs, or front arms, that were not big enough to be wings. They had three claws on them that might have helped them hold onto their food while they ate.

Caudipteryx zoui weighed about 10 pounds and liked to eat fish.

Caudipteryx zoui probably hunted its food by standing in the water and waiting for fish to swim by its legs. Then it would snatch them up with its sharp, pointy teeth.

Caudipteryx zoui probably did not chew its food. It swallowed it whole. That's because it had gizzard stones in its belly that would grind up its food. But you don't have gizzard stones, so you should chew your food before you swallow.



Cearadactylus

Cearadactylus
(say-ahr-ah-DAK-ti-lus)
pterosaur

Cearadactylus was not really a dinosaur. It was a flying reptile.

The wingspan of a cearadactylus was 4 to 5 meters (13 to 18 feet) wide, from wingtip to wingtip. It weighed somewhere around 30 pounds.

Cearadactylus was a meat-eater, which means it was carnivorous.

Cearadactylus had large, protruding teeth. All the better to eat you with, my dear.

Cearadactylus lived in Brazil about 115 million years ago during the early Cretaceous period.

The name cearadactylus means "Ceara finger."

Cearadactylus probably liked to swoop down and snatch fish right out of the water. Its long front teeth made it easy to hold onto the slipperier ones.

Cearadactylus wings were made of thick, leathery skin stretched over its long wing bones.

Cearadactylus belongs to a group of dinosaurs called pterosaurs, which means "winged lizards."

There are so many different kinds of pterosaurs. Some were as small as a few inches, and others were as long as 40 feet.

Pterosaurs had hollow bones and were lightly built so they could fly. They also had big brains and good eyesight.

Some pterosaurs flapped their wings to help them fly. Others simply stretched their wings and mostly glided.



Chindesaurus

Chindesaurus
(CHIN-dee-SAWR-us)
theropod

Chindesaurus might be the first dinosaur to live in North America.

Chindesaurus was all over the American Southwest a long time ago, around the time dinosaurs were first beginning to show up in the world.

Chindesaurus shared its world with other prehistoric animals, like primitive reptiles.

Chindesaurus lived about 225 million years ago, during a time scientists call the late Triassic Period.

The first chindesaurus was discovered in 1984 in Petrified Forest National Park, in Arizona, USA. Because it is so old, scientists are very interested in studying it more.

Chindesaurus was about 1.2 meters (4 feet) tall and 3 meters (11.5 feet) long. It weighed about 54.5 kilograms (120 pounds).

Chindesaurus had long hind legs compared to its total size. It is also known for its skinny tail, which it could thrash around like a whip.

Chindesaurus was a carnivore, which means it liked to eat meat. Do you?

The name chindesaurus means "Chinde lizard." It's named after Chinde Point, the part of the Petrified Forest where it was first discovered.



Daspletosaurus

Daspletosaurus
(dass-PLÉE-tuh-SAWR-us)
theropod

The name daspletosaurus means "frightful lizard." It is a cousin of the fearsome tyrannosaurus rex.

Daspletosaurus did not have as many teeth as T. rex, but they were larger—and scarier.

Daspletosaurus was smaller than T. rex, too, but it had bigger, more powerful arms.

Daspletosaurus was probably quicker and more vicious than T. rex, if you can believe that!

Daspletosaurus was probably able to attack and kill (and eat) heavy-plated dinosaurs like ankylosaurus.

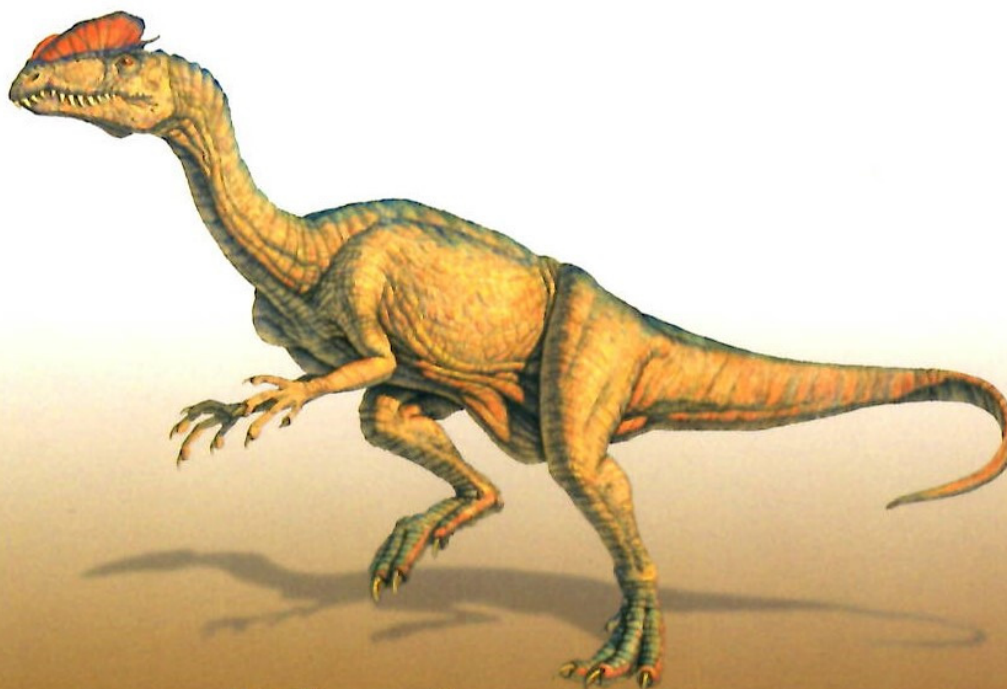
Like its terrifying cousin, daspletosaurs was a meat-eater (carnivore). A lot of scientists think its favorite food was another pre-historic creature called ceratopsian.

Daspletosaurus was about 4.9 meters (16 feet) tall, 9.1 meters (30 feet) long, and weighed about 2,700 kilograms (6,000 pounds). That's two tons of ceratopsian-eating dinosaur!

Daspletosaurus lived between 72 and 76 million years ago, during a time scientists call the late Cretaceous Period.

Daspletosaurus was first discovered in Alberta, Canada, in 1921 by Charles Sternberg.

Other daspletosaurus have been found in Montana, USA.



Dilophosaurus

Dilophosaurus (dye-LO-fuh-SAWR-us)

theropod

Dilophosaurus lived about 189 to 201 million years ago, during a time scientists call the early Jurassic Period.

Dilophosaurus was a meat-eater (carnivore) and one of the earliest predatory dinosaurs on earth.

Dilophosaurus was 6 meters (20 feet) long, about 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall, and weighed about 300 to 450 kilograms (650 to 1,000 pounds).

The front teeth of dilophosaurus were long and slender, so it could tear away at the flesh of its prey.

Dilophosaurus was quick and athletic. Its front legs were small and not used for running. They were used to hold onto its prey with a tight grip while it was ripping it to shreds.

Dilophosaurus had two crests on its head that ran between its eyes from its snout to the top of its skull.

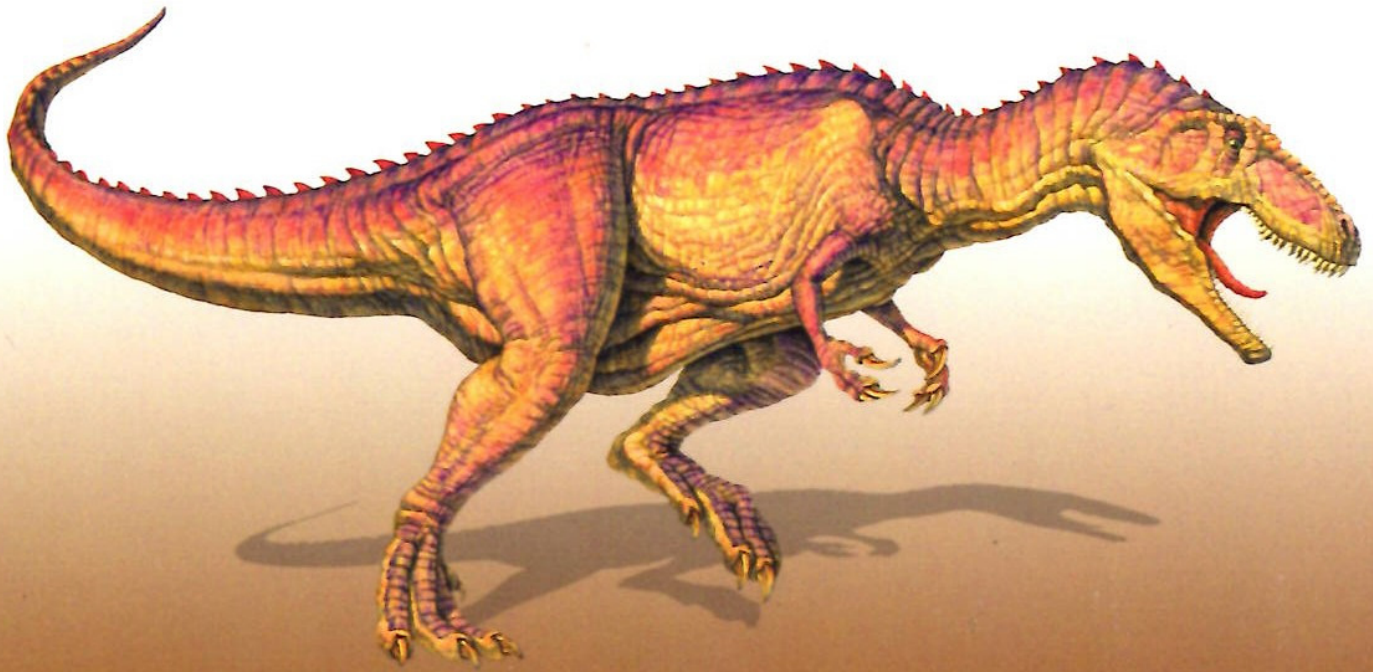
The name dilophosaurus means "two-crested lizard."

The crests made a dilophosaurus head look rounder and larger, so it probably helped scare away competitors for food and territory.

Dilophosaurus ran around in packs with its buddies. Do you?

Dilophosaurus has been found in Arizona, USA, and China.

Dilophosaurus was included in the 1993 movie Jurassic Park, but it wasn't the real thing. In the movie, dilophosaurus was much smaller than in real life, and it spit poison, which wasn't true. But it was pretty scary all the same.



Giganotosaurus

Giganotosaurus
(JY-gan-OH-toh-SAWR-us)
theropod

Giganotosaurus was probably the biggest, most massive predatory dinosaur that ever lived.

A predator is a meat-eating (carnivorous) animal that hunts and kills its food. In the case of giganotosaurus, it does it with its teeth and bare hands.

Giganotosaurus was 12 to 14 meters (42 to 46 feet) long and weighed nearly 8 tons (16,000 pounds).

A lot of people like to compare giganotosaurus to tyrannosaurus rex, but they are not the same. Giganotosaurus was bigger—and badder.

The largest giganotosaur was 3 feet longer than the biggest tyrannosaurus rex ever found.

T. rex had larger teeth, but the teeth of giganotosaurus were sharper, and better at slicing up flesh.

Giganotosaurus had a smaller brain than T. rex.

Giganotosaurus was found in South America, in Patagonia, Argentina. T. Rex has only been found in North America.

The name giganotosaurus means "giant southern lizard."

Giganotosaurus walked on two legs and probably could move pretty fast.

Giganotosaurus had a slender tail that it used for balance. Most likely, it didn't drag it on the ground as scientists used to believe. It probably held it up.

Giganotosaurus lived about 100 million years ago during a time scientists call the early Cretaceous Period.



Oviraptor

Oviraptor (oh-vee-RAP-tor) *theropod*

The oviraptor was a small (human-sized), bird-like dinosaur that ate both plants and animals, which is very unusual for dinosaurs.

Creatures that eat plants and animals are not herbivores or carnivores. They're called omnivores.

Oviraptor was about 1.8 to 2.5 meters (6 to 8 feet) long, and weighed about 25 to 35 kilograms (55 to 76 pounds).

Oviraptor had a strange, parrot-like head with a short, toothless beak and very strong jaws that were great at crushing food.

At first, scientists thought oviraptor ate eggs out of other dinosaurs' nests because of the shape of its food-crushing beak. But now scientists believe that oviraptor used that beak to crush shellfish like clams and oysters.

Another reason scientists thought oviraptor ate eggs was because they found its fossil with a bunch of prehistoric eggs around it. They thought the eggs belonged to another dinosaur, but now they realize it probably belonged to the oviraptor.

The name oviraptor means "egg robber."

Oviraptor actually laid its own eggs and took care of them until they hatched.

Oviraptor probably ate insects, plants, seeds, and seafood.

Oviraptor lived about 75 million years ago, during a time scientists call the late Cretaceous period.

Oviraptors had a horn-like crest on its snout and claws on its hands that were about 8 centimeters (3 inches) long.

Oviraptors are found in Mongolia.



Parasaurolophus

Parasaurolophus
(PAR-ah-saw-ROL-oh-fus)
ornithopod

Parasaurolophus had a bill, or beak, like a duck. It also had a big, hollow, bony crest on the back of its head that it may have blown like a horn.

Scientists think they've figured out what a parasaurolophus sounded like. They used computers to imitate the noise it could have made by blowing through its bony crest.

The bony crest of a parasaurolophus might have helped it smell, as well. The nostrils at the end of its duck-billed snout went up through the crest and back down it.

The crest of a parasaurolophus was up to 1.8 meters (6 feet) long and may have sounded like a foghorn.

Parasaurolophus had a custom notch on its back, right where the crest would touch when its head leaned back.

Parasaurolophus grew to be about 12 meters (40 feet) long and 2.8 meters (8 feet) tall. It weighed about 2 tons.

Parasaurolophus had pebbly skin and a pointy tail.

Parasaurolophus was an herbivore, so it only ate plants, mostly pine needles, leaves and twigs. Sounds tasty, doesn't it?

Parasaurolophus had excellent hearing and sight. Since it had no natural defenses, it probably used these senses to keep aware of predators.

Parasaurolophus could run pretty fast, and it probably lived in herds that moved around between shorelines and higher ground.

Parasaurolophus lived about 65 to 75 million years ago during a time scientists call the late Cretaceous Period.



Pteranodon sternbergi

Pteranodon Sternbergi (teh-RAN-oh-don STURN-ber-jee)
pterosaur

Pteranodon sternbergi is a large pterosaur, a flying lizard that is not really a dinosaur.

Pteranodon sternbergi had a wingspan of around 9 meters (more than 20 feet).

G. F. Sternberg found the first pteranodon sternbergi fossil specimen in Kansas in 1952. It was named after him.

Pteranodon sternbergi is one example of a group of flying reptiles called pteranodons.

The name pteranodon means "wing without tooth."

Although pteranodons had no teeth, they were carnivores, which means they ate animals. Mostly, pteranodons ate fish and squid.

Pteranodons spent most of their time soaring over the ocean looking for food. They must have been pretty good at it, because they grew to be very large.

Pteranodons had long crests on the back of their heads. Some of them stuck out behind, but the crest on the pteranodons stood upward.

The crest on pteranodon probably helped them fly. They might have used them like a rudder.

Pteranodons lived during the late Cretaceous Period, when the plains of Kansas were covered in water by a great big sea.

Pteranodons probably laid eggs, although we don't know for sure.



Quetzalcoatlus

Quetzalcoatlus
(KWET-zal-koh-AT-lus)
pterosaur

Quetzalcoatlus was named after the Aztec feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl. It was a huge pterosaur with a wingspan of up to 13 meters (more than 40 feet). That's as wide as a twin-engine jet fighter!

Quetzalcoatlus was probably the largest flying creature of all time. It is certainly the biggest one ever found.

Even though it was huge, Quetzalcoatlus probably weighed no more than 135 kilograms (about 300 pounds). That's because its skeleton was hollow and lightly built.

Quetzalcoatlus had a large brain and big eyes it used for finding food.

Quetzalcoatlus probably had fur-like fuzz that covered its body.

Quetzalcoatlus lived during the late Cretaceous Period and died out about 65 million years ago. It was the last of the pterosaurs.

Quetzalcoatlus had an extremely long neck. This makes some scientists think it lived like a vulture, soaring through the air and looking for dead dinosaurs to eat.

Quetzalcoatlus also had long, slender jaws. This makes other scientists think it liked to stick its beak into soft, muddy ground or pools of water to dig for shellfish.

Most scientists believe Quetzalcoatlus skimmed over the water to find prey. It probably used its excellent eyesight to spot its food, then swoop down and pluck it from the water.

Quetzalcoatlus fossils have been found in Texas. The first one was found in 1971.



Seismosaurus

Seismosaurus
(size-muh-SAWR-us)
sauropod

Seismosaurus was not the heaviest dinosaur that ever lived. And it isn't the tallest. But it is by far the longest, about 110 feet (33 meters) from snout to tail. That's almost half a football field!

Seismosaurus was a little bit longer than a blue whale, which runs about 100 feet.

Seismosaurus weighed more than fifteen full-grown African elephants!

The name seismosaurus means "earthquake lizard." Some scientists call it the Earth Shaker, and when you consider it weighed up to 70 tons, you can see why. Can you imagine how much the earth really did shake when a seismosaurus walked by?

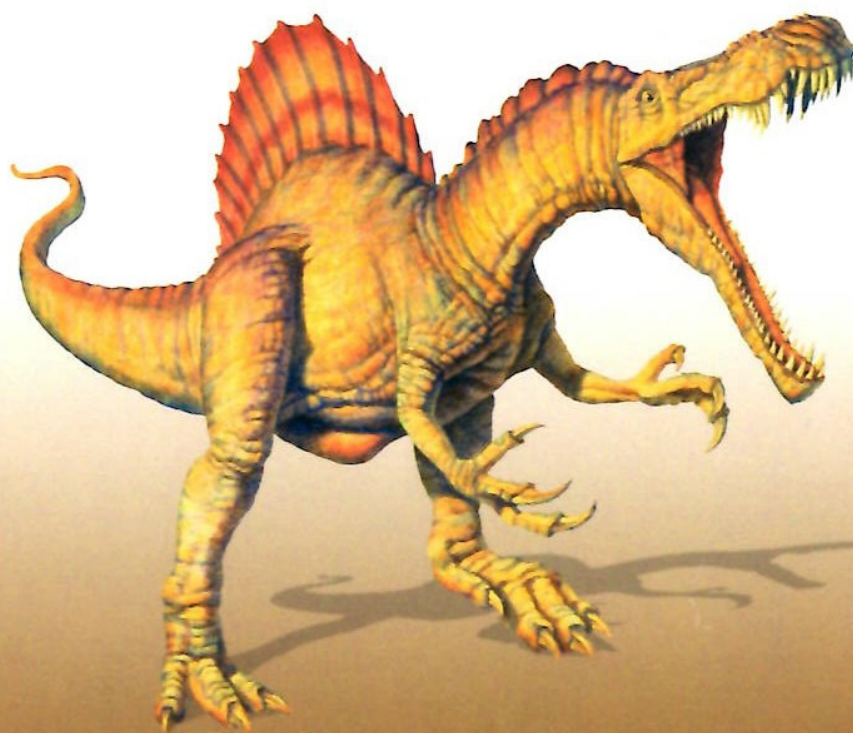
Seismosaurus was a plant eater. That makes it an herbivore.

Seismosaurus fossils were found in 1979 in New Mexico in what used to be an ancient riverbed.

Seisomosaurus lived 144 to 154 million years ago during a time scientists call the late Jurassic Period.

Seisomosaurus had nostrils on the top of its head, and its front legs were shorter than its hind legs.

A model of seismosaurus holds the world's record for the longest dinosaur skeleton mounted in a museum.



Spinosaurus

Spinosaurus
(spy-no-SAWR-us)
theropod

Spinosaurus is one of the strangest dinosaurs there is. It had a body like a small tyrannosaurus rex, a head like a gigantic crocodile, and a sail on its back like a dragon!

The sail on the back of a spinosaurus is held up by long, pointy spines. That's how it got its name: spinosaurus means "spiny lizard."

The spines on a spinosaurus back were up to 2 meters (6 to 7 feet) long. That's probably taller than you!

We don't know for sure what the sail on the back of a spinosaur was for, but it probably had something to do with attracting a mate or scaring away enemies.

Another idea that scientists have is that spinosaurus used its sail to control its body temperature. It soaked up heat when it felt too cold, and it let off heat when it felt too hot.

Spinosaurus was 12 to 15 meters (40 to 50 feet) long and weighed up to 4 tons. Some scientists think it got up to as much as twice that weight.

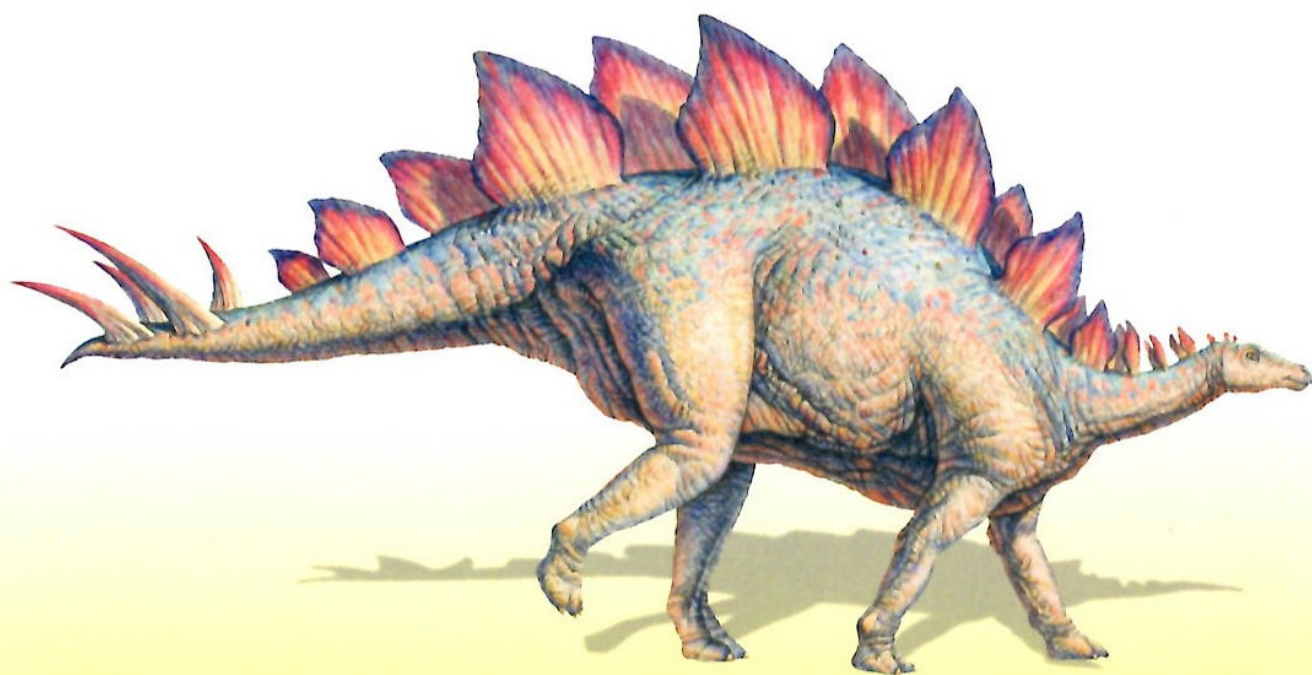
Spinosaurus was a carnivore, which means it ate meat. We know from the shape of its teeth that it feasted mostly on fish.

Fish must have been a healthy diet for spinosaurus because it was one of the longest-lasting dinosaurs we know of.

Spinosaurus lived between 95 and 110 million years ago, a time scientists call the Cretaceous Period.

Spinosaurus has been found in Egypt and Morocco, in Northern Africa.

Spinosaurus was pretty smart compared to most other dinosaurs because its brain was bigger in relation to its body size.



Stegosaurus

Stegosaurus
(STEG-oh-SAW-rus)
ornithopod

Stegosaurus is best known for the row of large pointed plates that run down its back.

Scientists aren't sure what the plates were for. Some think stegosaurus used them as armor protection. Others say they helped stegosaurus control its body heat.

Recently, scientists have begun to believe that stegosaurus used its pointy plates for display—both for scaring away attackers and for attracting a mate.

The stegosaurus tail was a very good weapon. It was strong and muscular, and the spikes on it were about 1 meter (about 3.5 feet) long.

Stegosaurus had a bunch of bones under its neck that protected its throat in case another dinosaur wanted to bite it.

A scientist named M. P. Felch found the first stegosaurus fossil in Colorado in 1877.

Other scientists have found stegosaurus fossils all over the place, from the United States to China. This means that they lived a long time and did very well before they became extinct.

Stegosaurus is one of a group of dinosaurs called stegosaurs.

There are many different types of stegosaur. Stegosaurus is the largest. It was 8 to 9 meters (26 to 30 feet) long, about 2.75 meters (9 feet) tall, and weighed about 3,100 kilograms (6,800 pounds).

Stegosaurus is an herbivore, so it ate only plants.

Stegosaurus lived in Colorado about 145 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. That's so long, the Rocky Mountains weren't even formed yet.



Syntarsus

Syntarsus (sin-TAR-sus)

theropod

Syntarsus was about 1.4 meters (4.5 feet) tall, 3 meters (9.8 feet) long, and weighed about 30 kilograms (65 pounds).

Syntarsus was a carnivore, so you know it loved to eat meat.

Scientists have found syntarsus fossils in Zimbabwe, Africa, and Arizona, USA. The ones found in the United States had a double crest on their heads. The ones found in Africa had none.

Syntarsus was pretty slender and its ankle bones were fused, or combined together. That's how syntarsus got its name: it means "fused ankle."

Syntarsus is a theropod. A lot of scientists think that theropods are linked to modern-day birds because they share similar features—like their feet.

Syntarsus was a predator, which means it hunted and killed its prey instead of looking around for animals that were already dead to eat.

Syntarsus had a long, pointed head with dozens of small, jagged teeth.

Scientists are pretty sure there were more female syntarsus than male ones, and the females were bigger in size.

Syntarsus lived during the early Jurassic Period, about 195 to 208 million years ago. In fact, it was so long ago that grasses and other flowering plants hadn't even evolved yet!

Syntarsus lived in a desert-like environment and probably hunted in packs.

Recently, a scientist discovered that a giant beetle already had the name syntarsus. So he renamed the dinosaur megapnosaurus (meg-AP-no-SAWR-us), which means "big dead lizard." That scientist thinks he's pretty funny.



Tapejara

Tapejara
(TAP-eh-HAR-ah)

pterosaur

Tapejara is from Brazil. That's where all their fossils have been found.

The name tapejara means "the old being." It comes from the mythology of the Tupi Indians who originally lived in Brazil.

Tapejara is known for the big bumps, or crests on its face. Scientists can't be sure, but they think these facial crests were used for display during the mating season, like a peacock fans its tail feathers.

Tapejara had no teeth. Some scientists think this means they feasted on the flesh of dead animals.

Tapejara lived during the early Cretaceous Period, about 115 million years ago.

Tapejara had a wingspan 3 to 5 meters (10 to 16 feet) and weighed up to 25 kilograms (10 to 25 pounds).

Tapejara is a pterosaur, which isn't really a dinosaur. It's a flying reptile.

Smaller pterosaurs like Tapejara died out before the larger pterosaurs. The larger ones became extinct last, about 65 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous Period.

Pterosaurs came in lots of shapes and sizes. Some were as small as a sparrow. Others were as big as a DC-3 airplane. Most were the size of a chicken.

Some pterosaurs had long snouts like tweezers, so they could reach into holes in the ground or between rocks to find food.

Other pterosaurs had beaks that worked like a sieve, so they could strain their food from water in swamps and marshes like flamingos do today.



Tenontosaurus

Tenontosaurus
(ten-ONT-oh-SAWR-us)
ornithopod

The name tenontosaurus means "sinew lizard."

Tenontosaurus was very large. It grew to about 7 or 8 meters (24 feet) long and weighed about 1,814 kilograms (about 2 tons).

Tenontosaurus lived in prehistoric swamps about 115 million years ago during a time scientists call the early Cretaceous Period.

Tenontosaurus was an herbivore, so it never ate meat, only plants.

Tenontosaurus probably ran on its two strong hind legs, but because it was large and bulky, it probably spent most of its time on all four legs, grazing like a cow.

The front legs of tenontosaurus were a little smaller than its hind legs.

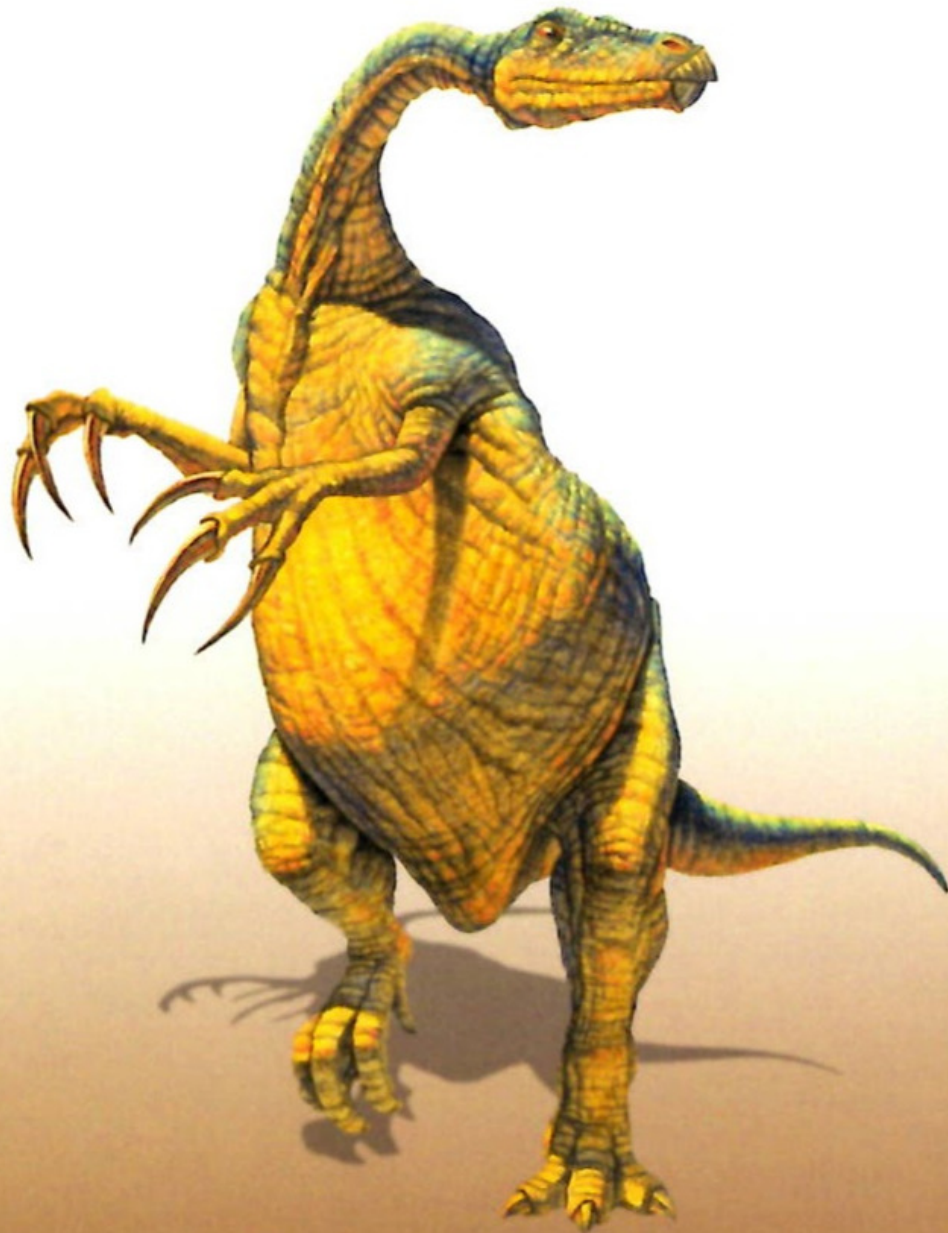
Tenontosaurus fossils have been found in the western and southwestern United States.

The teeth of a meat-eating dinosaur called deinonychus have been found near tenontosaurus fossils, so scientists think deinonychus hunted, killed and ate tenontosaurus.

The name deinonychus means "terrible claw."

Deinonychus probably hunted in packs because they were so much smaller than tenontosaurus, their favorite food.

Each deinonychus weighed about 100 to 150 pounds. Compare that to 2 tons of tenontosaurus.



Therizinosaurus

Therizinosaurus (THARE-ih-zin-oh-SAWR-us)

theropod

Therizinosaurus is another very weird dinosaur with many strange features. For instance, it had a long neck, a potbelly, a small head and tiny teeth like a sauropod, but it was really a theropod.

Even though therizinosaurus was a theropod, it didn't eat meat like most every other theropod did. It ate plants, so it was an herbivore.

Therizinosaurus had amazingly long finger claws. You'd think they were used to capture or kill other dinosaurs but they probably weren't. More than likely, therizinosaurus used its extra-long nails to pull leafy branches close to its mouth or strip the bark off of trees.

Although therizinosaurus didn't hunt other animals, when it had to defend itself against dinosaurs that did, those claws probably came in pretty handy.

The claws on the therizinosaurus were up to 28 inches long. Its arms were 7 feet.

When scientists first found therizinosaurus fossils, they didn't know it was a dinosaur. They thought it was the remains of some kind of giant turtle.

The name therizinosaurus means "turtle-like scythe lizard." A scythe is a long, curved blade, so now you know where therizinosaurus gets its name.

Therizinosaurus lived about 70 million years ago during the late Cretaceous Period.

Therizinosaurus weighed 2 to 3 tons and stood 20 feet tall and 39 feet long.

Therizinosaurus has been found in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and Transbaykalia.



Thescelosaurus

Thescelosaurus
(teh-SEL-uh-SAWR-us)
ornithopod

The name thescelosaurus means "marvelous lizard."

Thescelosaurus was an herbivore, which means it always ate plants, never other animals.

Thescelosaurus fossils have been found in South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming in the United States, and Alberta and Saskatchewan in Canada.

Thescelosaurus had five toes on each foot, a long tail, and rows of bony studs down its back. It had a small skull with large eyes, strong jaws and a horny beak.

Thescelosaurus had teeth like salad tongs, which came in handy when grazing on leafy greens.

Thescelosaurus lived between 65 and 77 million years ago during a time scientists call the late Cretaceous Period.

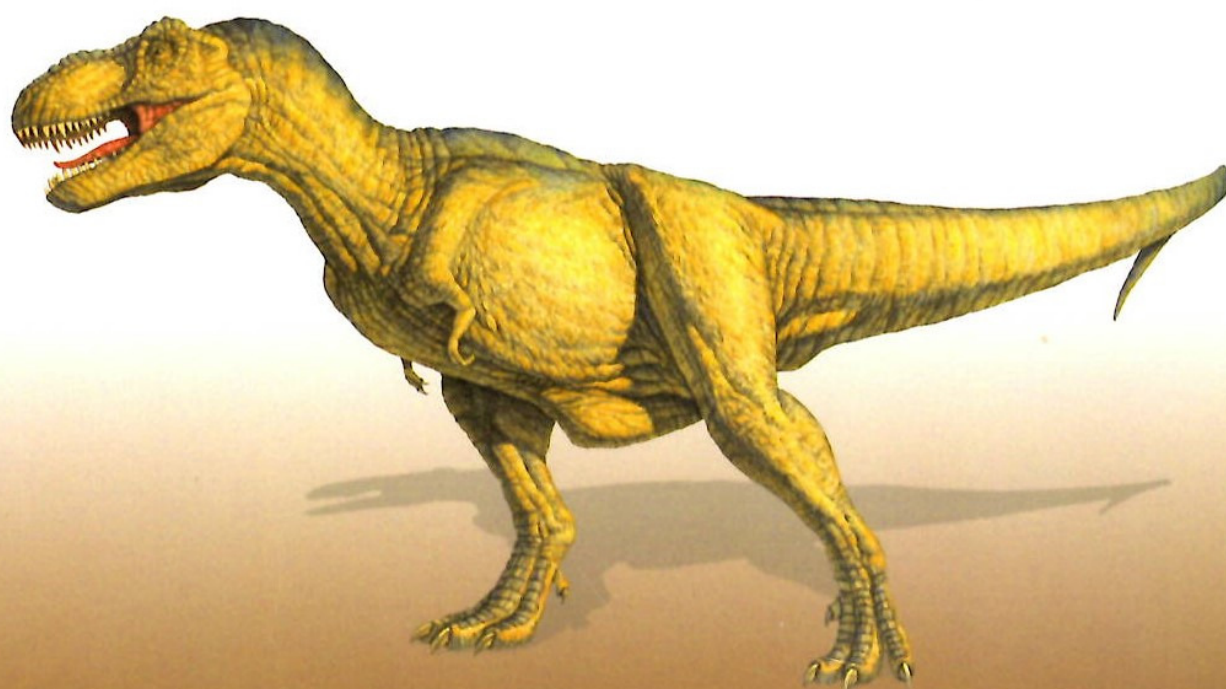
Thescelosaurus was a type of dinosaur called ornithischian, which means "bird-hipped."

Thescelosaurus was about 3 or 4 meters (10 to 13 feet) long and .9 meters (3 feet) tall. It weighed about 300 kilograms (roughly 665 pounds).

A thescelosaurus fossil was the first dinosaur ever found that contained a fossilized heart. Scientists named this particular thescelosaurus Willo.

Scientists looked at Willo's heart through a CT scan that showed it had four chambers, like the kind you find in birds and mammals.

Scientists think that since thescelosaurus had a four-chambered heart, it was warm-blooded instead of cold-blooded, which means it was more like a mammal than a reptile.



Tyrannosaurus rex

Tyrannosaurus Rex
(tie-RAN-oh-SAW-rus REX)
theropod

Tyrannosaurus rex means "tyrant lizard king." Some famous human tyrants are Attila the Hun, Adolf Hitler, and Joseph Stalin.

Tyrannosaurus rex (or T. rex) was a carnivore, which means it only ate meat—probably other dinosaurs.

There are two kinds of carnivorous dinosaurs: predators and scavengers. Predators hunt and kill live animals. Scavengers find animals that are already dead to eat.

Some scientists think T. rex was a scavenger that walked slowly and used its tremendous sense of smell to find carcasses.

Some scientists think T. rex was a predator that could actually move very quickly and use its gigantic teeth and jaws to catch its prey. No one knows for sure.

T. rex could eat up to 500 pounds (230 kilograms) of meat and bones in one bite!

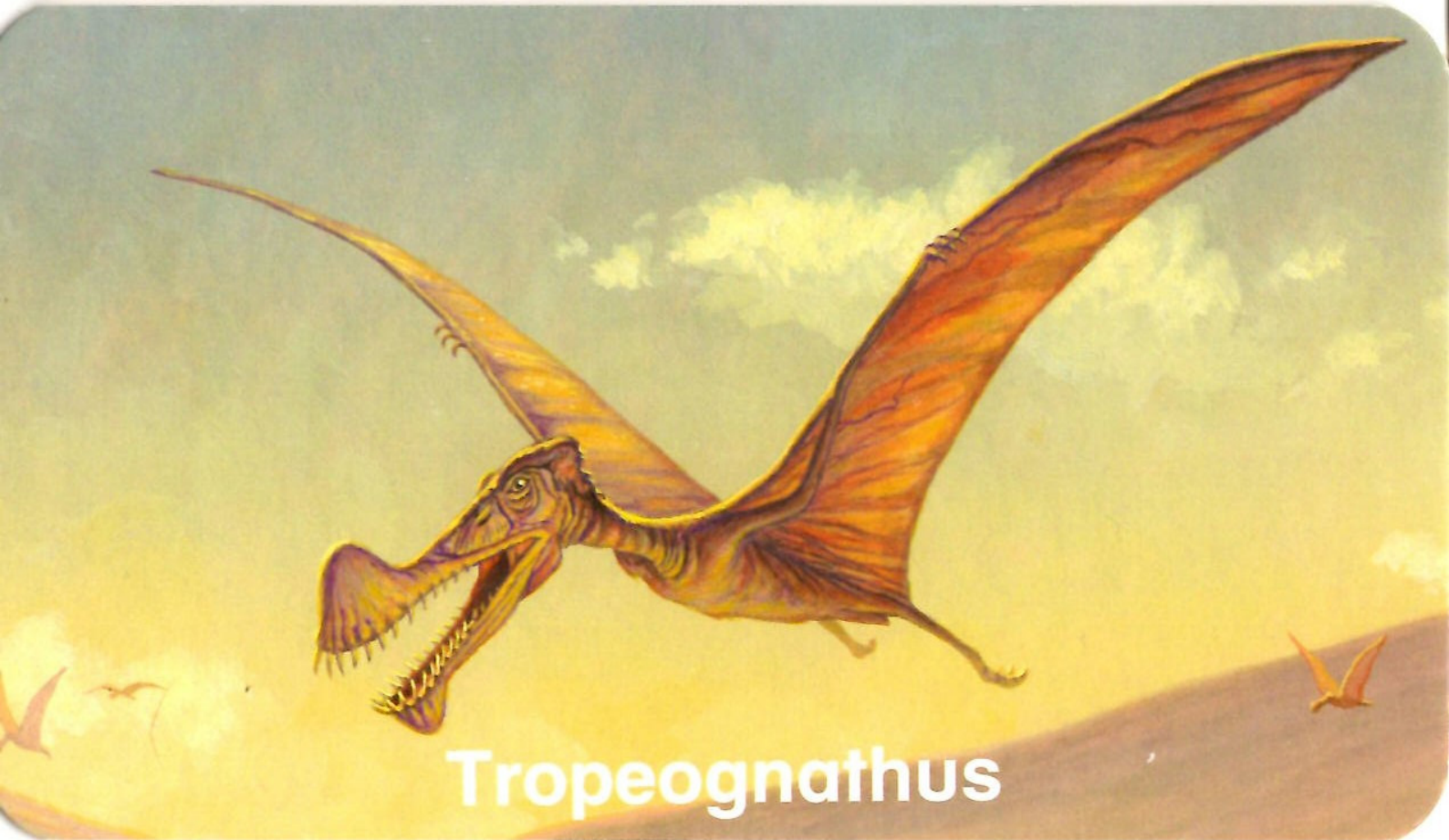
T. rex lived about 75 million years ago, give or take ten million.

It's hard to find complete fossil remains of T. rex. Only 30 have been discovered as of 2005, and only three of those have complete skulls.

T. rex had enormous hind legs, a gigantic tail, a great big head and, scariest of all, huge, gnashing teeth. But it had very tiny arms.

Even though T. rex's arms were small, they were three-times stronger than human arms.

T. rex grew up to 12.5 meters (41 feet) tall, 4.6 to 6 meters (15 to 20 feet) long, and weighed between 4 and 7 tons. That's up to 14,000 pounds of meat-eating dinosaur!



Tropeognathus
(TROPE-awg-nay-thus)
pterosaur

Tropeognathus was a flying reptile, like all pterosaurs.

Also like other pterosaurs, tropeognathus had a crest on the back of its head. But it was a much smaller crest than most others—more like a little bump.

Tropeognathus has been found in the Santana Formation in northeastern Brazil.

Tropeognathus was about the size of a hang glider. It had a wingspan of 20 feet and weighed about 30 pounds. It soared over the Brazilian seas like a gigantic seagull.

Tropeognathus was a carnivore, which means it loved to eat meat, particularly fish and slimy, slippery squid.

Tropeognathus had large, sharp teeth, which it used to grab its food right out of the water as it glided along the surface.

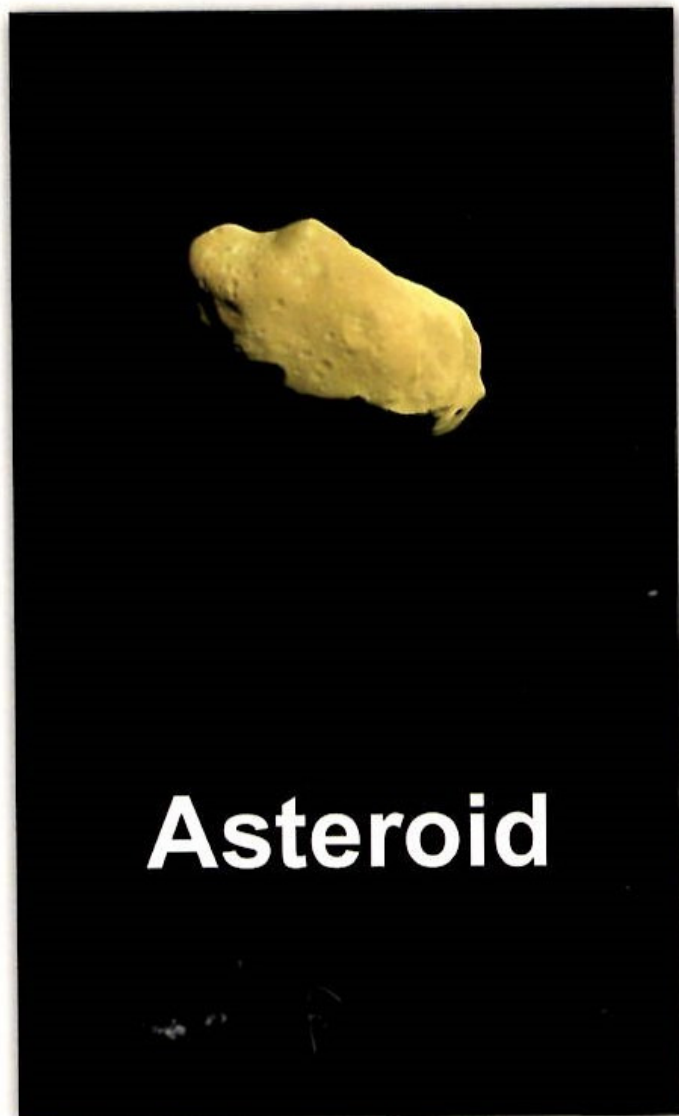
At the end of tropeognathus' beak were two ridges, which we call keels. One was on top, the other on the bottom. This is where tropeognathus got its name, because it means "keel jaw."

The keels helped tropeognathus cut smoothly through the water and keep its balance when it dipped down to grab its food. If it didn't have keels, it might fall into the water, get all wet, and have a hard time flying away before another predator came along.

Tropeognathus could probably fly even better than any bird or bat today. It had a brain that was specially made for flying and looking for food at the same time.

Tropeognathus had special wings that could sense wind speed, air temperature, and other flight conditions.

Tropeognathus lived between 112 and 122 million years ago, during a time scientists call the middle Cretaceous Period.



Asteroid

Dinosaurs flourished on Earth for tens of millions of years, much longer than humans. Then suddenly (it seems) they disappeared. What happened to them? Why did they become extinct? Scientists don't know for sure, but they believe an asteroid such as the one pictured here may have collided with Earth and caused more destruction than several nuclear bombs. As a result, a massive cloud may have covered the Earth for a very long time, blocking out the sun and damaging the environment, causing the dinosaurs to perish.

Credits (KRED-its) tributary

Much appreciation goes to the following people and organizations that provided the information we needed to make our dinosaur fun facts. As the pteranodon said to the seismosaurus, "Thanks, you've been a BIG help."

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